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Appl. No. : 09/518,699  
Applicant : Martin S. Berger  
Filed : March 3, 2000  
Title : System and Method For Promoting Intellectual Property  
TC/A.U. : 3627  
Examiner : Andrew J. Rudy  
Docket No. : 125446-1001

Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents  
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Anne Ziegler

*Anne Ziegler*  
(Signature of person mailing paper)

Date: July 7, 2003

TRANSMITTAL FOR BRIEF ON APPEAL

Pursuant to the Notice of Appeal filed April 18, 2003 in the above-identified patent application, Appellant hereby submits to the Board of Appeals and Interferences the following:

A Brief on Appeal in triplicate; and

A check for \$160 in payment of the fee for the Brief on Appeal.

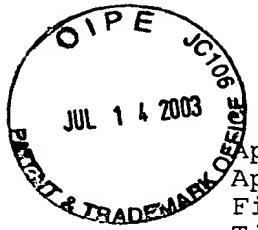
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Respectfully submitted,

Date: 7/07/03

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Anne Ziegler

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(Signature of person mailing paper)

Date: *July 7, 2003*

**BRIEF ON APPEAL**

Pursuant to a Notice of Appeal in the above-identified patent application filed on April 18, 2003, Appellant in the above-identified patent application submits the following Brief on Appeal.

**REAL PARTY IN INTEREST**

The real party in interest in the above-identified patent application is the inventor, Martin S. Berger.

**RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES**

There are no related appeals or interferences known to Appellant which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending Appeal.

**STATUS OF CLAIMS**

Claims 1 through 42 are currently pending in the above-identified patent application.

Copies of Claims 1 through 42 are attached as an Appendix to this Brief on Appeal.

#### STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

An amendment was filed on April 18, 2003 in response to the Final Rejection dated January 15, 2003. In an Advisory Action mailed May 6, 2003, the Examiner indicated that the amendment would be entered for purposes of appeal with Claims 1 through 42 standing rejected.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention pertains to a method of promoting intellectual property as set forth in Claims 1 and 18, together with the claims dependent thereon, which includes providing a host station with a database describing a plurality of intellectual property items and a description of each item, together with the steps of accessing the database and the description, sending survey information from a consumer station regarding the selected intellectual property item, and accessing the survey information from an industry station to determine the degree of consumer interest in the selected intellectual property item based on the survey information. The invention also pertains to a method of promoting intellectual property online including the steps of viewing at least a general description associated with a selected intellectual property item by a consumer station, selecting the intellectual property item by an industry station and viewing a confidential description of the selected item from the industry station whereby the confidential description is unavailable for view by the consumer station.

The invention still further is directed to a processor based system for promotion of intellectual property items which includes means for selecting an intellectual property item by a consumer station and an industry station and accessing a description of the selected intellectual property item, together with means for sending feedback data from a consumer station, which includes consumer survey information regarding the selected intellectual property item, and further including means for accessing the feedback data from an industry station to determine the degree of consumer interest in the selected intellectual property item. Still further, the invention

pertains to a processor based system which includes means for viewing a general description associated with a selected intellectual property item from a consumer station, means for selecting the intellectual property item by an industry station and means for viewing a confidential description from the industry station whereby the confidential description is unavailable for view by the consumer station.

With reference to the specification, on page 7, and as shown in FIGURE 1, a host station (12) may be an Internet domain whereby plural customer (intellectual property owner) stations (14) and consumer stations (18) may be connected to the host station, and industry stations (16) may be connected to the host station and to a customer station.

As shown in FIGURE 2 and described on page 9, beginning on line 14, the host station (12) includes a public access module (20) which may be connected to the consumer stations (18) and customer stations (14). A private access module (22) is connectable to the customer stations and to industry stations (16). FIGURE 2 illustrates the type of information which may be accessed via a public view module (26) and a private view module (28). Description beginning on page 10, line 4 and with reference to FIGURE 3, indicates the type of information which may be contained in a database (30) related to selected intellectual property items, as denoted in columns 36a through 36n. The database (30) may include such information as a control number, the type of intellectual property item, its title, its Standard Industrial Classification code, and the name of the "customer" or individual owning the intellectual property item, including address. A general description including an image file name, detailed information, legal status and production status may be included in the database (30) and as described beginning on page 10, line 4 to page 13, line 6.

FIGURE 4 illustrates a search menu (35) showing information items associated with searchable terms that may be part of database (30) and as described on page 11, lines 6 through 17.

A security access level may be assigned to each information item for selectively displaying information on the

public view module (26) that is not under a confidentiality agreement whereby, for example, a consumer station may view only general information (36G) in order to render an informed opinion as to the desirability of the product.

FIGURES 5 and 5A illustrate a method (50) for electronically promoting intellectual property which may begin by accessing the host station (12) by one of remote stations such as a customer station (14), an industry station (16) or a consumer station (18) at block (52) in FIGURE 5. The method outlined in the steps shown in FIGURE 5 is described beginning on page 16, line 6. Registration may be required of the remote station or user as indicated at block (54) in FIGURE 5 and FIGURE 7 illustrates the type of registration routine to be performed by the user. Moreover, FIGURE 8 illustrates a menu (80) that prompts the user to enter personal information and which is also described on page 17, line 6 through page 18, line 2.

As described beginning on page 18, line 3 through page 20, line 2, access to the system and using the method of the invention by an industry station requires entry of industry or company data, execution of a confidentiality agreement, and assignment of a PIN.

If the station accessing the host station at block (52) is a customer station, then the steps of determining whether or not it is to be a secret disclosure, entering any invention information and assignment of a PIN to the customer station takes place as illustrated in FIGURE 5 at blocks (110), (112), (114), (120), (122), (162), (164) and (166), and as described on page 20, line 2 through page 22, line 3.

As further shown in FIGURE 5, once a consumer enters a correct PIN at block (56), the consumer may conduct a search, access the results and complete the survey as described and shown by blocks (172), (174) and (178). The search may be conducted for more than one intellectual property item. Consumer incentive rewards, such as coupons, etc. are described on page 26, line 14. Survey information is acquired via the survey module (40) as described on page 14, line 9, and shown on

FIGURE 2 and which may be accessed via both the public view module (26) and the private view module (28).

As further shown in FIGURE 5, if the PIN number entered at block (170) is an industry PIN, then the industry station may conduct a search as shown in FIGURE 5A at block (186), access the results at block (188), indicate interest at block (190) and display and negotiate a transaction as indicated at blocks (192, 194, and 196). A description of the process using the system of the invention which may be accessed by the consumer station begins on page 25, line 1, through page 26, line 21.

If the process involves access by a customer PIN, the customer is given access to all available information associated with the customer's intellectual property as shown at block (184), FIGURE 5, and as described beginning on page 27, line 1 through line 10.

If the PIN entered at block (56) of FIGURE 5 is an industry or customer PIN, the process shown in FIGURE 5A is carried out and as described beginning on page 27, line 1 through page 28, line 19.

The step of summing the survey information collected from the different consumer stations is described on page 25, beginning on line 20. The step of searching a desired grouping of intellectual property items having at least one common feature is described beginning on page 11, line 6 and as shown in Figure 4 of the drawings.

Releasing confidential information from a customer station for display on a public view module and releasing such information at the host station is described on page 23, beginning on line 5.

The description of a processor based system and method for promotion of intellectual property including the provision of a host station having an Internet site and at least one database at the Internet site is described on page 4, beginning on line 3. The processor based system which includes the host station, means for selecting one of the intellectual property items by a consumer station and an industry station, means for accessing the description associated with the selected intellectual property item, means for sending feedback data from the consumer

station to the host station and means for accessing the feedback data from an industry station is described on page 4, beginning on line 3, and with reference to Figure 2 of the drawings, and as described beginning on page 9, line 14.

#### ISSUES

The issues presented for review in this appeal are:

Whether Claims 1 through 42 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) in view of the teaching of U.S. Patent 5,410,598 to Shear.

#### GROUPING OF CLAIMS

Appellant considers the rejected claims to be separately patentable and that the claims do not stand or fall together. Appellant presents hereinbelow the reasons why the claims are considered separately patentable.

#### ARGUMENTS

Each of the independent claims in this application (Claims 1, 18, 25 and 42) is directed to a method or system for promoting intellectual property by permitting access to a computer "host" station by consumers via consumer stations, which consumers then view selected intellectual property items listed on a database which resides at the host station. Consumers then provide information back to the host station in the way of survey information directed to the desirability of or interest in purchasing the selected intellectual property item.

The method and system further provides for accessing the survey information from an industry station to determine by an industry participant the level of interest in the item by consumers, as indicated by the survey information, so that the industry participant can determine whether or not there is any encouragement to manufacture and sell the item after obtaining a license to do so. The method and system set forth in the independent claims is believed to be unique and unobvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of processor based systems or methods for determining consumer interest in an intellectual property item, and providing access by an industry entity to

determine the level of interest and the possibility of obtaining a license to manufacture and sell selected intellectual property items.

With regard to Claim 1, the method set forth in this claim includes the steps of providing a host station having a database on which resides information regarding a plurality of intellectual property items including a description, accessing the database by a consumer station, selecting at least one of the intellectual property items and sending survey information to the host station related to the selected intellectual property item, and further including the step of accessing the survey information from an industry station to determine the level of interest in the selected item based on survey information. Claims 2 through 17 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1.

The Examiner rejected these claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over U.S. Patent 5,410,598 to Shear and indicated that the teaching of Shear as set forth, for example, at column 14, line 53 plus, makes obvious the method of Claim 1. Appellant respectfully submits that Shear does not make obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art the method of promoting intellectual property as set forth in Claim 1 and the claims dependent thereon. Shear discloses a database usage monitoring, billing and security system for controlling access to and accounting for usage of databases which include information which is transmitted to users of the database. Appellant respectfully submits that the description of how to access database information as set forth in Shear completely fails to suggest or make obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art of methods for promoting intellectual property, the steps of accessing by a consumer station a database including a detailed description of a selected intellectual property item, sending survey information from the consumer station to the host station regarding the intellectual property item and then accessing the survey information by an industry station to determine the level of consumer interest in the selected item. There is clearly no relationship between Shear and the steps set forth in Claim 1. Shear is not concerned with promoting intellectual property by

*et al.  
Claim 1*

allowing consumers to view descriptions of intellectual property items, and providing for consumers to provide survey information related to the selected intellectual property items and then providing for access to the survey information from one or more industry stations so that an industry accessing the survey information may determine whether or not there is sufficient consumer interest via the survey information to warrant obtaining rights to manufacture and sell the intellectual property item. There is clearly no relationship between the database usage monitoring, billing and security system of Shear with the intellectual property promotion method set forth in Claim 1. Appellant verily believes that the subject matter of Shear is far removed from that of the claims on appeal. Appellant has been unable to identify any feature of the claims, including but not limited to the steps of Claim 1 described hereinabove, in, suggested by or made obvious by Shear. Claim 1 is believed to be patentable together with Claims 2 through 42.

Appellant respectfully submits that, with regard to Claim 2, Shear fails to disclose or suggest the step of summing survey information regarding intellectual property items received from different consumer stations.

With regard to Claim 3, Shear fails to disclose or suggest sending survey information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase a selected intellectual property item.

With regard to Claim 4, Shear also fails to disclose or suggest providing for a consumer to include information reflective of the consumer's desire to purchase the selected intellectual property item.

With regard to Claim 5, Shear fails to disclose or suggest the step of providing an incentive to a consumer accessing the intellectual property item database to send survey information.

With regard to Claim 6, Appellant respectfully submits that Shear fails to disclose or suggest an incentive which is chosen from a group consisting of currency, coupons, discounts, products and services.

With regard to Claim 7, Appellant respectfully submits that Shear fails to disclose or suggest the step of searching a desired grouping of intellectual property items having at least

one common feature prior to selecting the particular intellectual property item.

Claim 8 is believed to be patentably distinct over the teaching of Shear wherein the one common feature (as set forth in Claim 7) is a Standard Industrial Classification code or a North American Industry Classification System code.

With regard to Claim 9, Appellant respectfully submits Shear fails to disclose or suggest the steps of sending from a customer station to the host station data representative of an intellectual property item at least partially held by a customer at the customer station, the data being included in the at least one database and comprising at least a description of the customer's intellectual property, together with the step of displaying the description at the host station for view by a consumer and an industry station upon selection of the customer's intellectual property item.

Appellant respectfully submits that Shear fails to disclose or suggest a method of promoting intellectual property according to Claim 10 wherein the host station includes an Internet site and the consumer, industry and customer stations include processor based workstations remote from the Internet site and connectable thereto for accessing the database.

With regard to Claim 11, Appellant respectfully submits that the step of providing access to the survey information at the Internet site by only the customer station and the industry station is clearly not disclosed or suggested by Shear.

With regard to Claim 12, Shear fails to disclose or suggest that the database further comprises a confidential information item for a selected intellectual property item.

With regard to Claims 13 and 14, Shear clearly fails to make obvious the steps of providing a confidential information item which is viewable only by a customer station at least partially owning the intellectual property item and by an industry station and the step of selectively releasing from the customer station at least one confidential information item for view by a customer station.

With regard to Claims 15 through 17, Appellant respectfully submits that Shear fails to disclose, suggest or

make obvious, taken together with the steps of Claim 1, providing for each of the consumer and industry stations to include a processor based work station remote from the Internet site which includes the host station, or wherein the description of each intellectual property item includes at least one general information item viewable by a consumer station and one confidential item viewable by an industry station, or selectively releasing at least one confidential information item for view by a consumer station.

A method of promoting intellectual property online as set forth in Claim 18 is not disclosed in, suggested by or otherwise made obvious by Shear. Shear is completely silent on a method of promoting intellectual property online which includes the steps of providing a description of plural intellectual property items having at least one general description item and at least one confidential description item, selecting an intellectual property item by a consumer station connected to a host station, viewing the one general description item from the consumer station, selecting the intellectual property item by an industry station connected to the host station and viewing the confidential description item from the industry station whereby the confidential description item is unavailable for view by the consumer station.

With regard to Claim 19, the steps of sending consumer survey information regarding the intellectual property item from a consumer station to a host station and then accessing the survey information from an industry station to determine the degree of consumer interest in a selected intellectual property item based on the consumer survey information is clearly not suggested by Shear. Shear only briefly suggests that an audit trail provided by the system of Shear can be used by publishers whose items are on the Shear database to perform marketing surveys. However, Shear does not disclose, suggest or make obvious that any market survey information would be available in the manner set forth in Claims 18 and 19.

Shear clearly fails to make obvious the method in Claim 20 of providing survey information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase a selected intellectual property item.

Appellant respectfully submits that the additional method steps set forth in Claims 21 through 24 are clearly not made obvious by the teaching of Shear. Shear does not provide an incentive to a consumer at a consumer station for sending feedback data (consumer survey information). Shear does not disclose or suggest providing the steps of searching by an industry station a desired grouping of intellectual property items having a common feature and wherein the feature becomes one of a Standard Industrial Classification code or a North American Industry Classification System code. Still further, Shear fails to disclose or suggest or make obvious the step of selectively releasing a confidential description item at the host station for view by a consumer station.

With regard to independent Claim 25, the processor based system set forth in this claim for promoting intellectual property requires a database including plural intellectual property items and a description of each item, together with means for selecting an intellectual property item by a consumer station and an industry station, respectively, means for accessing the description associated with the intellectual property item by the consumer and industry stations, means for sending feedback data from the consumer station to the host station, including consumer survey information and means for accessing the feedback data from an industry station to determine the degree of consumer interest in the selected intellectual property item based on consumer survey information.

Shear clearly fails to disclose or make obvious such a system.

With regard to Claims 26 and 27, Shear does not disclose or make obvious a processor based system for promoting intellectual property which includes means for summing consumer survey information from different consumer stations for a selected intellectual property item which includes information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase the selected item.

Claim 28 is believed to be patentable for the reasons set forth above in support of the patentability of Claims 26 and 27.

Shear fails to disclose or suggest or make obvious a processor based system which includes means for providing an incentive to a consumer at a consumer station for sending

feedback data to a host station wherein the incentive is currency, coupons, discounts, products and services as required by Claims 29 and 30, respectively.

Shear fails to disclose or make obvious means for searching a desired grouping of intellectual property items having at least one common feature wherein the feature is one of a Standard Industrial Classification code and a North American Industry Classification code as required by Claims 31 and 32, respectively.

Appellant respectfully submits that Shear fails to make obvious a processor based system as required by Claim 25 and further comprising, as required by Claim 33, means for sending from a customer station to a host station intellectual property data regarding an intellectual property item held at least partially by the customer at the customer station and which includes at least a description of the intellectual property item together with means for displaying the description for view by a consumer station and an industry station, respectively.

With regard to Claim 34, Shear fails to make obvious a processor based system for promoting intellectual property wherein each of a consumer station, industry station and customer station if connectable to a host station via the Internet or where feedback data is accessible at the Internet site by only a customer station and industry station as required by Claim 35.

Appellant respectfully submits that Shear fails to make obvious the provision of the elements set forth in Claims 36 through 41 for the same reasons as set forth above with respect to Claims 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17.

Appellant respectfully submits that the Examiner has erred in rejecting Claim 42 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Shear. As regards the claims previously addressed in Appellant's argument, Shear clearly fails to disclose or suggest the provision of a processor based system for promotion of intellectual property wherein each item of property includes a general description, a confidential description and whereby a consumer station may view a general description and an industry or other station may view the confidential description for the same item of intellectual

property and which confidential description is unavailable for view by the consumer station. As mentioned hereinabove, the entire concept of a method and system for promoting or marketing intellectual property as required by the claims currently pending in this application is completely absent from the teaching of Shear.

In the prosecution of the application, the Examiner has stated that it is noted that it is well known and common knowledge to locate intellectual property material from a host station by way of a consumer station and having another station associated with the procurement process. However, Appellant has set forth in Claims 1, 18, 25 and 42, together with the claims dependent thereon, a method and system whereby consumers may view new intellectual property on a database and potential manufacturers or "industries" may access the same database for related purposes whereby the promotion of the intellectual property residing on the database is carried out in a manner which facilitates introduction of new products and services to the marketplace. Shear is clearly not directed to nor does Shear suggest or make obvious such a method or system.

Appellant respectfully submits that the Examiner has erred in rejecting the claims over the Shear reference and that Claims 1 through 42, as presented for consideration on appeal, are allowable and should be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: July 7, 2003

  
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APPENDIX TO BRIEF ON APPEAL

1. A method of promoting intellectual property, the method comprising:

providing a host station having at least one database, the at least one database including:

a plurality of intellectual property items; and  
a description of each intellectual property item;

accessing said database and selecting one of said intellectual property items by a consumer station;

accessing the description associated with the selected intellectual property item from the consumer station;

sending survey information from the consumer station to the host station, the survey information of the selected intellectual property item based at least in part on the description of the selected intellectual property item; and

accessing the survey information from an industry station to thereby determine the interest in the selected intellectual property item based on the survey information.

2. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 1, and further comprising summing the survey information from different stations for the selected intellectual property item.

3. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 2, wherein the survey information includes information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase the selected intellectual property item.

4. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 1, wherein the survey information includes information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase the selected intellectual property item.

5. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 4, and further comprising providing an incentive to a consumer at the consumer station for sending the survey information.

6. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 5, wherein the incentive is chosen from the group consisting of currency, coupons, discounts, products, and services.

7. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 1, and further comprising searching a desired grouping of intellectual property items having at least one common feature prior to selecting the at least one intellectual property item.

8. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 7, wherein the at least one common feature is one of a Standard Industrial Classification code and a North American Industry Classification System code.

9. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 1, and further comprising:

sending from a customer station to a host station intellectual property data representative of an intellectual property item at least partially held by a customer at the customer station, the intellectual property data being included in the at least one database and comprising at least the description of the customer's intellectual property item; and

displaying at least the description of the customer's intellectual property item at the host station for view by the consumer and industry stations upon selection of the customer's intellectual property item.

10. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 9, wherein the host station includes an Internet site, and further wherein each of the consumer, industry, and customer stations includes a processor-based work station remote from the Internet site and connectable thereto for accessing the at least one database.

11. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 10, wherein the survey information is accessible at the Internet site by only the customer station and the industry station, respectively.

12. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 11, wherein the at least one database further comprises at least one confidential information item for the selected intellectual property item.

13. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 12, wherein the at least one confidential information item is viewable only by the customer station at least partially holding the intellectual property item and by the industry station.

14. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 13, and further comprising selectively releasing, from the customer station, the at least one confidential information item for view by the consumer station.

15. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 1, wherein the host station includes an Internet site, and further wherein each of the consumer and industry stations includes a processor-based work station remote from the Internet site and connectable thereto for accessing the at least one database.

16. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 1, wherein the description of each intellectual property item includes at least one general information item viewable by at least the consumer station and at least one confidential information item viewable by the industry station.

17. A method of promoting intellectual property according to claim 16, and further comprising selectively releasing the at least one confidential information item at the host station for view by the consumer station.

18. A method of promoting intellectual property online, the method comprising:

providing a host station having an Internet site and at least one database accessible at the Internet site, the at least one database including:

a plurality of intellectual property items; and

a description of each intellectual property item, the description having at least one general description item and at least one confidential description item;

selecting one of said intellectual property items by a consumer station connected to the host station;

viewing the at least one general description item associated with the selected intellectual property item from the consumer station;

selecting said one intellectual property item by an industry station connected to the host station; and

viewing the at least one confidential description item from the industry station;

whereby said at least one confidential description item is unavailable for view by the consumer station.

19. A method for promoting intellectual property according to claim 18, and further comprising:

sending feedback data on the selected intellectual property item from the consumer station to the host station, the feedback data including consumer survey information of the intellectual property item based at least in part on the description of the associated intellectual property item; and

accessing the feedback data from the industry station to thereby determine the degree of consumer interest in the selected intellectual property item based on the consumer survey information.

20. A method for promoting intellectual property according to claim 19, wherein the consumer survey information includes information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase the selected intellectual property item.

21. A method for promoting intellectual property according to claim 20, and further comprising providing an incentive to a consumer at the consumer station for sending the feedback data.

22. A method for promoting intellectual property according to claim 18, and further comprising searching, by said industry station, a desired grouping of intellectual property items having at least one common feature prior to selecting by said industry station the at least one intellectual property item.

23. A method for promoting intellectual property according to claim 22, wherein the at least one common feature is one of a Standard Industrial Classification code and a North American Industry Classification System code.

24. A method for promoting intellectual property according to claim 18, and further comprising selectively releasing the at least one confidential description item at the host station for view by the consumer station.

25. A processor-based system for promotion of intellectual property, the system comprising:

a host station having at least one database, the at least one database including:

a plurality of intellectual property items; and  
a description of each intellectual property item;

means for selecting one of said intellectual property items by a consumer station and an industry station, respectively;

means for accessing the description associated with the selected intellectual property item from said consumer station and said industry station;

means for sending feedback data from the consumer station to the host station, the feedback data including consumer survey information of the selected intellectual property item based at least in part on the description of the selected intellectual property item; and

means for accessing the feedback data from an industry station to thereby determine the degree of consumer interest in the selected intellectual property item based on the consumer survey information.

26. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 25, and further comprising means for summing the consumer survey information from different consumer stations for the selected intellectual property item.

27. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 26, wherein the consumer survey information includes information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase the selected intellectual property item.

28. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 25, wherein the consumer survey information includes information reflective of a consumer's desire to purchase the selected intellectual property item.

29. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 28, and further comprising means for providing an incentive to a consumer at the consumer station for sending the feedback data.

30. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 29, wherein the incentive is chosen from the group consisting of currency, coupons, discounts, products, and services.

31. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 25, and further comprising means for searching a desired grouping of intellectual property items having at least one common feature prior to selecting the at least one intellectual property item.

32. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 31, wherein the at least one common feature is one of a Standard Industrial Classification code and a North American Industry Classification System code.

33. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 25, and further comprising:

means for sending from a customer station to a host station intellectual property data representative of an intellectual property item at least partially held by a customer at the customer station, the intellectual property data being included in the at least one database and comprising at least a description of the intellectual property item; and

means for displaying at least the description of the intellectual property item at the host station for view by the consumer station and the industry station, respectively.

34. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 33, wherein the host station includes an Internet site, and further wherein each of the consumer station, the industry station, and the customer station includes a processor-based work station remote from the Internet site and connectable thereto for accessing the at least one database.

35. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 34, wherein the feedback data is accessible at the Internet site by only the customer station and the industry station, respectively.

36. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 35, wherein the at least one database further comprises at least one confidential information item for at least one of the intellectual property items.

37. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 36, wherein the system includes means operable whereby the at least one confidential information item is viewable only by the customer station at least partially holding the intellectual property item and by the industry station.

38. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 37, and further comprising means for selectively releasing, from the customer station, the at least one confidential information item for view by the consumer station.

39. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 25, wherein the host station includes an Internet site, and further wherein each of the consumer and industry stations includes a processor-based work station remote from the Internet site and connectable thereto for accessing the at least one database.

40. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 25, wherein the description of each intellectual property item includes at least one general information item viewable by at least the consumer station and at least one confidential information item viewable by the industry station.

41. A processor-based system for promoting intellectual property according to claim 40, and further comprising means for selectively releasing the at least one confidential information item at the host station for view by the consumer station.

42. A processor-based system for promotion of intellectual property, the system comprising:

a host station having an Internet site and at least one database accessible at the Internet site, the at least one database including:

a plurality of intellectual property items; and  
a description of each intellectual property item, the description having at least one general description item and at least one confidential description item;

means for selecting one of said intellectual property items by a consumer station connected to the host station;

means for viewing the at least one general description item associated with the selected intellectual property item from the consumer station;

means for selecting said one intellectual property item by an industry station connected to the host station; and

means for viewing the at least one confidential description item from the industry station;

whereby said at least one confidential description item is unavailable for view by the consumer station.